



Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: November 9, 2022

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM.

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation (Zoom).

Minutes.

1. Administration.

Members in Attendance: Beth Benedikt, Bill Copithorne (DPW), Lenard Diggins, Ray Jones, Jeff Maxtutis, Scott Smith, James Stubbe, Laura Swan (Chair), and Shoji Takahashi.

Members Absent: John Aslanian, Melissa Laube, Tycho Nightingale, and Corey Rateau (APD).

Members of Public in Attendance: Petru Sofio.

The Chair provided notice regarding Remotely Conducted Meetings, referring the members to the agenda attachment entitled "Governor Charles Baker's 3/12/2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law". The Chair reviewed the meeting ground rules and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

B. Approval of October 10, 2022 Meeting Notes.

Minutes for the Meeting of October 10, 2022 were approved, subject to the change in Section 8(3) related to bike parking at Arlington High School:

"(3) bike parking. In late September, two additional racks were placed in front of the school, for a total of 60 spaces (including the previously provided racks). Scott Smith observed 72 bikes parked at AHS on one morning; hence the recommendation for one more rack."

C. Correspondence sent/received between October 7 and November 6, 2022.

1. "Unclear Stop Signs at Symmes Rd Light," Letter to SB from Greg Dennis, 10/25/22. Discussed under Section 5.

D. Thank you to Dan Amstutz.

Dan Amstutz, formerly of DPCD, has taken a position at VHB. TAC thanks him for advocating for the Town. He skillfully communicated with other groups and was instrumental in obtaining funding for projects throughout the Town.

E. Future TAC Meeting Dates.

“Governor Charles Baker’s 3/12/2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law” permits remotely conducted meetings through March, 2023, unless it is extended. Dates of TAC Meetings for next year will be on the second Wednesday of the month. For in-person meetings, the Town Hall Annex meeting room on the second floor will need to-be reserved.

In the past, the second half of the January meeting was scheduled as a social/potluck. Scott Smith suggested holding the social/potluck later in the spring during warmer weather (perhaps outdoors or with windows open for safety).

Laura Swan inquired about skipping a meeting in July or August. Scott Smith responded that ABAC skips the July meeting and holds the August meeting to prepare for Town Day. He suggested that TAC keep the July and August dates on the calendar now and consider adjusting later this spring depending on the work load.

2. Public Comments (for information only, not for action).

There were no public comments.

3. Town Issues/Activities (not already on the agenda).

A. Bill Copithorne provided an update from the Department of Public Works (DPW).

The construction season will close next week. Crosswalks near Peirce and Stratton Schools have been completed. Pavement markings have been completed for the season. Lake St pavement markings have been completed. Scott Smith praised the new pavement markings. Petru Sofio asked about placement of MUTCD markings such as no parking in areas where bike markings are placed. Bill Copithorne responded that he will inquire with the Highway Division.

Some sidewalk work has been delayed until spring due to granite curbing shortages. For construction of the Mystic St bridge over Mill Brook near the Police Station, a notice of intent will be filed in the next month.

Laura Swan inquired about a Town process for having shrubs and tree branches trimmed back that are encroaching on sidewalks. Bill Copithorne responded that DPW sends a letter to the neighbor to address the sidewalk encroachment. People can submit complaints to the online Request and Answer portal on the Town website or contact DPW Engineering to send a notification letter.

Laura Swan and Jeff Maxtutis discussed snow-removal priority locations. In the past, years ago, DPW and TAC had developed a map of areas near schools where intersections and corners should be cleared of snow. Scott Smith commented that locations where traffic supervisors are located should be cleared of snow as a priority. In addition, preferred safe routes, as posted on the APS website, should have priority for snow removal. Bill Copithorne responded that he will check with the Highway Supervisor: his understanding is that major roads are the top priority followed by schools, and then other roadways.

B. There was no update from the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD).

C. There was no update from the Police Department (APD).

4. Franklin St/Lewis Ave/Philips St

At a Town-wide level, DPW is examining roads and sidewalks for corridor improvements. If such improvements are not made when roadways are resurfaced, it could be another 15+ years for them to-be implemented.

The intersection at Franklin St/Lewis Ave/Philips St is a wide, semi-confusing intersection, and it is scheduled for spring improvement. The goal is to reconfigure the intersection to have 90-degree turns with shorter crossing distances for pedestrians. The south corner of Lewis Ave and Franklin St is designed to have two separate ramps instead of a single apex ramp.

Scott Smith praised the design. He noted that residents park their vehicles in the curve, which is to-be removed in the design. DPW will need to talk to the residents about their current behaviors. Jim Stubbe asked whether the residents parked there to slow drivers.

Jeff Maxtutis also praised the design. He commented that the turn radius from Franklin St to Philips St looks tight; the bump out for the east-west crosswalk across Franklin St will be helpful to pedestrians. Also, the Town should consider adding new street trees if they will not block visibility. He inquired about the location of catch basins in the intersection. Laura Swan continued that rain gardens in East Arlington have been well received and have been effective for storm water runoff. Bill Copithorne responded that the location of catch basins might facilitate rain-garden installations.

5. New Business: Summer St/ Symmes Rd

Shoji Takahashi discussed the correspondence that requested review of the intersection. In brief, ~300' stretch of Summer St intersects with Symmes Rd, Hemlock St, and Brattle Rd, which is controlled by a traffic signals with complicated signal timing that might confuse users. Notably, MBTA 67 Bus travels through this segment, and there is a bus stop located at Summer St and Symmes Rd.

In response to a question from Jeff Maxtutis, Bill Copithorne said that the Town has jurisdiction of the traffic signal, although MassDOT might have to review and approve any changes.

Scott Smith said that stop bars could be added, for example the Bates Rd and River St intersections with Broadway and Warren St. Petru Sofio commented that the walk sign across Symmes Rd is concurrent, creating a difficult crossing. He suggested a leading pedestrian interval be programmed into the signal timing to improve the situation.

Scott Smith, Jim Stubbe, and Shoji Takahashi (lead) will form a Working Group.

6. Update: Mt Gilboa Traffic Calming

Ray Jones mentioned that the Lowell St improvements, in particular the speed feedback sign and RRFB crosswalk, have been well received.

Residents had complained about a double-yellow line being striped on Westminster Ave from Downing Square to the Town Line at Lexington. Previously, the double-yellow line was painted from Downing Square to Westmoreland Ave. Laura Swan asked if a roadway does not meet the criteria for double-yellow striping, what can be done? Bill Copithorne responded that the lines can be grinded off.

Jeff Maxtutis added that Westminster Ave is under volume for the criteria, however DPW has the right to place it for safety issues. The presence of a double yellow line does not necessarily change driver speed (which is the concern of the residents). He suggests waiting for the yellow line marking to fade away rather than damage road surface by grinding it off.

Ray Jones added that the residents have not pushed further on the double-yellow line. He will be conducting stop compliance study of the intersection of Westminster Ave and Westmoreland Ave now that stop bars have been painted.

7. Update: Downing Square Signage

Ray Jones will take the lead of the Working Group.

8. Update: Gibbs School/ Rawson Rd

Scott Smith conducted observations at Rawson Rd/Foster St and Broadway (near Gibbs School). If this is on the near-term list for DPW improvements, then this curb can be redone to shorten crossing distances.

9. Update: Huntington Rd

Shoji Takahashi and Beth Benedikt presented their observations of Huntington Rd and discussed the proposed Road Geometry Changes by DPW. The modification would create a 90-degree turn from northbound Park Ave Ext onto Huntington Rd eastbound, which would require slower vehicle speeds. This would also reduce pedestrian crossing distances.

Laura Swan commented that the proposed changes would be a big improvement for pedestrians, making clear how they are to walk on Park Ave Ext. Jeff Maxtutis suggested that there may be a desire line for pedestrians walking from Park Ave Ext to Huntington Rd.

Petru Sofio inquired about the possibility of adding a crosswalk across Park Ave Ext at Huntington Rd. Shoji Takahashi and Beth Benedikt responded that they did not observe many pedestrians crossing Park Ave Ext at Huntington Rd, but that might be because the existing roadway is too wide to comfortably cross.

10. Update: Thompson Area Traffic Calming

Scott Smith characterized Thompson School dismissal at the intersection of N Union St and Norcross St as “chaos”. He added that vehicles are restricted along N Union St due to parking, and there was no speeding. He listed missing signs or markings near the location:

1. School Zone sign, Everett St NB.
2. Pedestrian Crossing sign at N. Union St and Norcross St SB.
3. No parking here to corner N. Union St NB just north of Norcross St. Also, just south of Norcross St.
4. Crosswalk across Norcross St.
5. Fog line on N Union St by the angle parking area.

He added the following observations at/near River St and University Rd:

1. Advance signs exist. The sign at the crosswalk on River St SB is far off to the right and not very visible to oncoming traffic.
2. Watch for marked crosswalk wear.
3. Consider speed tables on River St.

Laura Swan continued that there is a lot of traffic on River St in the morning, and the traffic supervisor there has numerous complaints. This section does not qualify as a School Zone. The fog line might help narrow the road and reduce vehicle speeds.

11. Update: Wachusett Ave and Appleton St

Laura Swan said that she has received comments on Dow Ave via email from Dallin School. Dallin School is updating its Emergency Evacuation plan, which might use Dow Ave as a route. Dallin SRTS would like to discuss it with the TAC Working Group on the Wachusett Ave and Appleton St intersection.

12. Update: Eastern Ave

Jeff Maxtutis provided a brief update. One thing to consider is making this section of Eastern Ave a speed safety zone. The Working Group will be conducting a site visit walk. One other consideration is that the playground is scheduled to-be updated in the next year.

13. Update: Comp Permit 1021-1027 Mass Ave

Due to the short timeframe, Jeff Maxtutis provided recommendations in an email. In brief, the existing conditions section was not complete, and future trips only considered changes on Mass Ave and not Brattle St. The site layout plan was not clear: the bike storage room is placed in the basement, but it was not clear how residents would access the space. Vehicle parking space dimensions were not clear, and some areas might have very tight turns.

He recommended that sidewalk improvements (ADA Compliance) be included. In addition, rents for residential space and parking should be separated, and MBTA passes be provided to residents to encourage use of public transit.

Bill Copithorne said that Wayne Chouinard examined the plans and commented for DPW. He concurred about the incomplete traffic analysis, and recommendations for sidewalk repairs and improvements for ADA Compliance.

14. Update: Park Ave/Frontage Road signals

Laura Swan updated TAC that MassDOT District 4 will consider the resident comments/complaints and examine the signal timing and signal head placement.

15. Discussion: Summer St/ Victoria Rd

Jim Stubbe presented a draft Memo on short-term recommendations for the crosswalk at Summer St and Victoria Rd. In brief, pedestrians have difficulty seeing vehicles and drivers have difficulty seeing pedestrians. One reason is the No Parking zone near the crosswalk is not adequate and needs to-be expanded to improve the sightlines. Flex posts might be added to prevent drivers from parking near the crosswalk.

In response to a question from Laura Swan, Bill Copithorne responded that Arlington uses rubber removable flex posts that DPW removes from the roads before plowing and returns when plowing is finished. Jim Stubbe noted that the fields are not used during the winter, and parked vehicles limiting visibility is less of a problem.

Jeff Maxtutis praised the draft Memo. He asked the Memo include the number of parking spaces that will be removed by expanding the No Parking Zone. He also asked for a diagram to show the elements of the plan.

Scott Smith endorsed the idea of a near-term consideration of installing an RRFB for increased safety. The RRFB can be moved if/when the intersection is redone under the Mystic River Path Connector to the Minuteman Bikeway Project.

Jim Stubbe noted that the speed limit along this section of Summer St is not clear. There are 30 mph signs near Mystic St and at the Burns Arena. Jeff Maxtutis recommended the Working Group check the recorded speed regulations for the roadway. Bill Copithorne will check on the recorded regulations.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.